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Ringette Alberta Within the Culture of Technology: A Tenuous Existence

by

Lyndsay Margaret Wheelans

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Physical Education and Sport Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1995

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Ringette Alberta Within the Culture of Technology: A Tenuous Existence submitted by Lyndsay Margaret Wheelans in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. D. Shogan

Dr. J. Hogg

Dr. D. Cullen

Date Sept 27/95

Dedication

To my Mom. I know that you would be most proud of my accomplishment.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide a historical description of a provincial sport organization utilizing the notion of technology as described by Franklin (1984, 1990). The study is directed towards answering the following questions:

a. What are the features of the "real world of technology"?

b. Are these features manifested in Ringette Alberta and, if so how?

c. What are implications of the presence or absence of these features for the administration of Ringette Alberta; for its female and male administrators; and for experiences by actual or potential female players? The organization selected for the research was Ringette Alberta.

Data were obtained using two research methods. First, organizational documents were collected, which covered the time period 1986 to 1995. From these documents two initiatives were identified, one being the establishment of a permanent office and a paid staff member and the second being the establishment of two provincial team programs. Focusing on these two initiatives, six semi-formal interviews of past and present board members of the organization were conducted and transcribed verbatim.

Utilizing the data, examples were provided as to how the features of technology have become manifested in Ringette Alberta.

Conclusions, summaries and ideas were presented as to future of the sport of ringette and of Ringette Alberta within the culture of technology.

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I would like to thank my advisor Debra Shogan. I know that I will never be able to tap into all of the knowledge that she possesses but I was fortunate enough to tap into the most important knowledge that she has - a powerful patience and understanding of people. This project would never have been transcribed from my head to paper without her encouragement.

There are many friends, of whom I will not mention in name for fear of forgetting someone, from graduate school that I would also like to thank for finishing their program before me. I was just waiting for everyone else to get finished so that I knew that I could really do it. I know that I learned more about thinking and academics in my discussions with these friends over java than I ever did in all of my years at university.

To all of the members of Ringette Alberta who granted interviews and supplied documentation I am grateful, without them this project would never have been completed.

I would also like to acknowledge my family of friends that have grown from the ringette community and the women's community in Edmonton. From this family I have learned more about myself than anyone could ever teach.

Thank you to my family - Dad, Rob and Cathy. I know that you have all wondered what the heck I was doing. Maybe you will all have a better understanding now that you can read the final product. Thank you for your love and understanding.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Sport in Canada

Sport, in Canadian society and in other developed societies has changed dramatically since the late nineteenth and and early twentieth centuries (Guttman 1978; Hall, Slack, Smith and Whitson 1991). Sport has transformed from "spontaneous and playful pastimes into highly organized and performance-oriented sports" (Hall et al 1991). The more recent history of Canadian sport has seen a very dramatic increase in government involvement both financially and administratively in all levels of sport (Macintosh, Bedecki and Franks 1987). In 1961, Bill C-131, An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport was passed in the House of Commons. Although the government assumed an indirect role in sport with the passing of Bill C-131, it provided the impetus for greater government involvement in sport in the 1970s and 1980s (Macintosh et al 1987). Increasing government involvement in sport has had a very direct effect on amateur sport organizations in Canada. Sport organizations at one time were very informally organized and structured (Slack 1983). Increasingly over the past 30 years, these organizations have taken on a very rationalized and organized form. As Kikulis, Slack, Hinings and Zimmerman (1989) state...

> The structural arrangements of amateur sport organizations have become increasingly characterized by such attributes as more professional staff, more formalized operating procedures, and a hierarchical system of authority (p.129).

At the same time as the Canadian government was increasing their involvement in sport and amateur sport organizations, there was also an increasing acceptance of the participation of girls and women in sport (Hall and Richardson 1982; Lenskyj 1986). As Hall and Richardson (1982) stated over a decade ago, "Increasing numbers of girls and women participate in sport, whether for recreational or competitive purposes" (p.73). These modern day developments and changes in sport can be linked to changes in the major social institutions in Canada such as "government and politics, the economy and big business, the mass media and the educational system to name a few" (Hall et al 1991, p. 11). The above changes can also be linked to broader structural forces in our society such as class, gender, and ethnic forces.

Another structural change that has occurred within the past twenty to thirty years has been the "quantum jump in the social and political impact of technology during the last two or three decades" (Franklin 1984, p. 2). Technology as Franklin (1990) states has "changed the social and individual relationships between us" (p. 12). When Franklin refers to technology she is not just speaking of the tools of technology such as computers, cars and fax machines but of the system of technology that is multifaceted and "includes activities as well as a body of knowledge, structures as well as the act of structuring" (p. 12). Although the concept of technology may seem to be out of the ordinary in a study of

sport organizations, it never the less provides a unique way in which to view sport and sport organizations. As Hall et al (1991) point out about sociology, "it is precisely the sociologists willingness to ask new and different questions about old ways of doing things that has pointed the way toward innovative solutions" (p.15).

Statement of the Problem

In Canada, the development of a girls only game called ringette was seen as an opportunity for girls and women to participate in a winter, team sport. At the time, this alternative game was considered to be more appropriate for girls than the "boys" game of ice hockey because the rules limited the movement of players to particular zones and to no body contact. I have chosen to study Ringette Alberta (RA), a provincial sport organization in order to explore implications of the values and systems of technological culture to Ringette Alberta. This study is directed towards answering the following questions:

a. What are the features of the "real world of technology"?

b. Are these features manifested in Ringette Alberta and, if so how?

c. What are implications of the presence or absence of these features for the administration of Ringette Alberta; for its female and male administrators; and for experiences by actual or potential female players?

Methodology

In this case study of Ringette Alberta (RA), I utilized qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The study covers the time period from April, 1986 to April, 1995. This time period describes nine ringette 'seasons', beginning with the 1986-87 season and ending with the 1994-95 season. I have based the beginning and end of a 'season' on the annual general meetings (AGM) of the association that are held at the end of April in each year. At every AGM, a new board of directors is elected for the following year (season).

The documentation that I utilized in the case study included: Executive (Board) meeting minutes, AGM meeting minutes, semi-annual general meeting minutes, association correspondence, constitution and bylaws, audited statements and profile documents submitted as applications for financial assistance.

Following the document analysis procedure, I conducted tape-recorded interviews in June and July 1995 with six individuals who had been active with Ringette Alberta as executive (board) members or paid staff during the time period of the study indicated above. The interview schedule was based on gathering information about the individual interviewees involvement in ringette and Ringette Alberta. During the interview, I focused on a few key initiatives taken by the Association during this time period. I had discovered these initiatives through my own experiences with

ringette and Ringette Alberta as well as by reading about them in the Association's documentation. The key initiatives were the establishment of a permanent office and a first paid employee for the Association and the establishment of two provincial team programs. These initiatives were explored in terms of the effects that they may or may not have had on the sport, on the Association, and on the volunteer board members, including themselves. I was attempting to discover the interviewees recollection and perception of the key initiatives that I had identified. By asking questions about these key initiatives, I was also attempting to expose the features of technology that Franklin (1984, 1990) utilizes to describe the technological culture in which we live and of which I will describe in further detail in the subsequent chapter.

Selection of Interviewees

My knowledge of the organization gave me a good idea about who would have knowledge about the organization and also of the sport of ringette. I concentrated on individuals that had been directly involved in Ringette Alberta during the time period of my study but for various lengths of time and at various time periods. The length of involvement ranged from two to five seasons. The different lengths and time periods of involvement of each interviewee provided differing perspectives. The participants to whom I spoke had also been involved and continue to be involved in ringette in

other capacities as parents, coaches, players and volunteer administrators. I interviewed three women and three men. Four out of the six interviewees began their involvement in ringette because of their daughters participation in the sport. The fifth interviewee had started her involvement in ringette prior to her teen years as a player. The sixth interviewee began her involvement in the sport as the Association's first paid employee. Although she had played ringette in high school, she had no prior background in organized ringette.

Choice of Topic & Insider Status

I chose the topic because of my own involvement in the sport of ringette, first as a player and then later as an official, coach and finally as a paid staff member of the organization. My involvement in the sport of ringette has been a very positive one but I have experienced many frustrations throughout my involvement. My choice of topic has been a way for me to understand some of these frustrations and hopefully in the end to promote positive change, growth and development for Ringette Alberta and for the sport itself.

My various roles within the sport and also within the organization as a paid employee has obviously impacted on the research and on the analysis of the results. I bring my own thoughts, ideas and experiences to the research and I have tried throughout the thesis to express these. My involvement

in the game has been in the urban centre of Edmonton and my experiences have been primarily at the higher levels of the sport. I have been participating in ringette almost since its inception within the province of Alberta in 1974. I have participated in more than a dozen Ringette Alberta provincial championships as well as several national championships as a player and an official. More recently I have been involved in the provincial team programs as a player participating at the 1990, 1992 and 1994 Western Canadian Championships and World Championships, as an assistant coach with the Alberta team that participated at the 1995 Canada Winter Games and now as the head coach of the Alberta team that competed at the Canadian World Qualifier tournament in September 1995. My employment with the Association began as a part-time position in the late fall of 1992 in the position of provincial coach. Presently I hold a full-time position that is titled provincial coach/program coordinator.

Limitations of Study

This case study of a provincial sport organization is limited by the following factors:

1. This study is limited to one provincial sport organization.
2. This study was limited by the accuracy and accessibility of the documentation utilized in the document analysis.
3. This study is limited by the number of years examined and by the selected sample of individuals interviewed.

Organization of Thesis

In the following chapter I describe the development of technology and the features of technology as defined by Franklin (1990, 1984). These features provide the framework or as she states the "house" from within this study was conducted.

In chapter three I provide some historical information about state involvement in Canadian sport and Canadian sport organizations in order to place the change in Ringette Alberta in historical context. This is followed by a description of the evolution of the sport of ringette and of the early beginnings of Ringette Alberta, prior to 1986-87. The fourth chapter includes the case study and the analysis of Ringette Alberta. In the final chapter, I discuss the future of ringette and Ringette Alberta as well as possibilities for change.

Chapter II

THE CULTURE OF TECHNOLOGY

The concept of technology encompasses and is intertwined throughout all aspects of our lives. Franklin (1990) provides an analogy of the concept of technology as...

> ...the house in which we all live. The house is continually being extended and remodeled. More and more of human life takes place within its walls, so that today there is hardly any human activity that does not occur within this house. All are affected by the design of the house, by the division of its space, by the location of its doors and walls. Compared to people in earlier times, we rarely have a chance to live outside this house (p. 11).

Franklin (1984) describes technology as a system where "changes in one part of the system (whether it is mechanical or organizational) inevitably influence and affect all other parts of the system" (p. 4). In this chapter I describe this technological system in order to provide a more specific example of how technology has inculturated sport and sport organizations. This makes possible a lead into the following chapter about the recent history of sport organizations in Canada and more specifically the early history of ringette and of Ringette Alberta.

Describing Technology

Technology is more than just technical knowledge, skills, tools and machines. Franklin (1990) describes what technology is not...

> Technology is not the sum of the artifacts, of the wheels and gears, of the rails and electronic transmitters. Technology is a system. It entails far more than its individual material components. Technology involves organization, procedures,

> symbols, new words, equations, and most of all, a mindset. (p.12)

Technology is really the practice of a particular way of doing something. This practice encompasses more than just machines. Pacey (1983) defines technology as

> the application of scientific and other knowledge to practical tasks by ordered systems that involve people and organizations, living things and machines (p.6).

Just as Franklin (1990) describes technology as a system involving more than just the wheels and gears, of the rails and electronic transmitters, Pacey (1983) identifies three aspects that make up technology as practice. These aspects include: the "technical" such as technical knowledge, techniques, tools and machines; the "organizational" such as economic and industrial activity, users and consumers and; the "cultural" such as values, goals, ethical codes, awareness and creativity (p.6).

Technology is defined in this way in order to encompass the far reaching affects that technology has. By looking at technology in its more restricted sense as a machine or tool only, "some of the wider aspects of technology-practice have come to be entirely forgotten (Pacey 1983, p. 8). These wider aspects are the human aspects of technology that include aspects of organization and culture. Franklin (1990) provides an example of speed limits, speed traps, radar detectors and now, photo radar. These mechanical devices were invented with an intended use in mind. The idea was to

deter automobile drivers from speeding. Without police departments taking this mechanical device and devising a way to set up speed traps, the device itself is very neutral. Franklin (1990) discusses how speed limits at one time were

> instituted to enhance safety, not to produce criminality. The emphasis shifted from common safety to individual 'deterrence' (p. 57).

The mechanical device of the speed trap is neutral without adding the human aspects of the organization and cultural values that go with it. This is an example of how limiting an understanding of technology to the way in which it is used as a tool or technical device is inadequate in explaining the range of effects of technology.

Franklin (1990) claims that "the change in the structure of society and the nature and organization of work during the industrial revolution became a pattern onto which our real world of technology with its much more extended and sophisticated restructuring is grafted (p. 61). The industrial revolution was really about the organization of work.

In the next section, I describe some of the patterns of the industrial revolution and link them to Franklin's (1990) notion of technology.

The Organization of Work

Although the industrial revolution is typically dated to the period around the 1870s, the stimulus for the industrial

revolution is often dated to 1769 when the invention and improvements to the steam engine and the power driven spinning machine were patented. Yet "the first factories of the industrial revolution, and the system of capitalism that went with them did not depend on the steam engine at all" (Pacey 1983, p. 18). The first industrial revolution was not a technical revolution at all but rather a revolution of the control and division of labor. Prior to the industrial revolution, spinners and weavers worked in their own homes and workers controlled their own work process. Braverman (1974) describes this work process as

> the self-imposed pace which included many interruptions, short days and holidays, and in general prevented prolongation of the working day (p. 65).

Each individual worker was specialized in his or her particular work but the worker was in control of the entire work process from start to finish. Franklin (1990) describes this work process as a type of technology - a holistic technology.

> Using holistic technologies does not mean that people do not work together, but the way in which they work together leaves the individual worker in control of a particular process of creating or doing something (Franklin 1990, p. 19).

The specialization of the work is by product not process and the worker is still in control of the final product. This type of technology is most often associated with craft such as potters, weavers or cooks as I have described above. Braverman (1974) calls this the social division of labor and

he says this "division of labor in society is characteristic of all known societies; the division of labor in the workshop is the special product of capitalist society" (p. 72). He illustrates the difference between the two with the example of "the practice of farming, cabinetmaking, or blacksmithing" compared to "the repeated tightening of a single set of bolts hundreds of times each day or the key punching of thousands of cards each week throughout a lifetime of labor" (p. 73).

When workers were brought together under one roof and tasks were broken down into a series of very simple operations, a new division of labor was developed. Braverman (1974) identifies this division of labor as the "detailed division of labor" (p. 73). He further describes how this early innovative principle of a "division of labor has remained the fundamental principle of industrial organization" (p. 70). Franklin (1990) defines this division of labor as a prescriptive technology. It differs from holistic technologies because the division of labor is by process and the work is divided and organized intentionally into clearly identifiable steps. The worker is only responsible for a small portion of the final product. The final product becomes the responsibility of a manager or supervisor. In organizational theory this division of labor is called specialization and is defined as "the degree to which organizational tasks are subdivided into separate jobs" (Daft 1992, p. 13).

Franklin (1990) critiques prescriptive technologies

although she also admits that they are extremely effective in terms of production, efficiency and profit. In other less measurable terms, prescriptive technologies have created what Franklin has described as a "culture of compliance". As she explains:

> Work is orchestrated like a piece of music - it needs the competence of the instrumentalists, but it also needs strict adherence to the score in order to let the final piece sound like music. Prescriptive technologies constitute a major social invention. In political terms, prescriptive technologies are designs for compliance (Franklin, 1990, p.23).

Merchants brought all of the workers together under one roof was so that they could have more control of the work process and over production. "They believed that if they brought these people together in supervised workshops, they could achieve more consistent quality, enforce longer working hours and a faster pace of work" (Pacey 1983, p. 19). The underlying reason for this pattern of control and management by the merchant or owner was profit.

What is significant about the changing pattern of work during the industrial revolution is that it "gives expression not to a technical aspect of the division of labor, but to its social aspect" (Braverman 1974, p. 81). It is important to note that it has not been machines and tools that have defined the organization of work. Technical inventions actually followed the bringing together of workers under one roof and the detailed division of labor. It is really these two earlier changes to the work environment that augmented

the invention and use of machines. As Franklin (1984) states about machines and devices.

> They are not the essence of technological development, they are but the tools of technological processes of organization and control. Although mechanics and devices were the most visible instrument of industrialization and centralization, many administrative, legal and social control techniques have played an equally decisive part in the formation of the technological world order (p. 4).

Franklin expresses concern about the extensive use of prescriptive technologies. The success of prescriptive technologies in terms of productivity and efficiency have now created a model that is being used "not just in material production but also in administration, economic activities and in many aspects of governance" (Franklin 1990, p. 24). Throughout her book Franklin (1990) examines the human and social impacts of the technology that have been described above. Although many of these impacts are utilized in the analysis of the research undertaken in this study, it is appropriate to provide a brief outline of some of these in the following section.

Impacts of Technology

In our society, we utilize more and more of what Franklin (1990) has described as prescriptive technologies. In terms of innovation, productivity and efficiency, prescriptive technologies have been very successful. The success of this system has been a catalyst in the continued

use of it in many aspects of our lives and not just in the organization of work. The use of prescriptive technologies requires external management, control and planning. It also requires individuals to comply to the standards set by the planners. Not only has this reduced the worker's skill and autonomy, it has also created a culture in which people have come to accept external control and internal compliance as normal. Pacey (1983) has described this acceptance as that of "technological determinism". Technological determinism "presents technical advance as a process of steady development dragging human society along in its train" (p. 24). The problem with this is that many of societies social problems are linked to cultural lag or the inability of our society to adapt to technological developments. It is as if people are the problem and technology is the only solution.

Scientific and Expert Knowledge

The use and success of prescriptive technologies has also increased our belief in science and decreased our trust in our own experiences. There is a thinking that all things are

> ...made under conditions that are, at least in principle, entirely controllable. If such control is not complete or completely successful, there is an assumption that improvements in knowledge, design, and organization can occur so that all essential parameters will become controllable (Franklin 1990, p.27).

This type of thinking or logic has glorified the

knowledge of the expert and has diminished the "people's trust in their own direct experiences" (Franklin 1990, p. 116).

Pacey (1983) describes experts as being trained in "tunnel vision" (p. 36).

> They learn to examine specialized aspects of problems with a concentrated attention that blinds them to other issues. Food shortages and energy problems become narrowly technical questions, with many aspects of organization and use forgotten (Ibid).

The Changing Role of Government

Franklin (1990) also discusses the changing role of government. She states that technology has changed the obligation of governments

> whose institutions are funded through a taxation system , to attend to those aspects of society that provide the indivisible benefits - justice, peace, as well as clean air, sanitation, drinkable water, safe roads, equal access to education; public institutions, from courts and schools to regulatory and enforcements systems, developed to do these public tasks (p. 70).

Governments now disguise their use of public money to build the infrastructures that support technology, many of which are private institutions. This has led to the further development of technologies but also to the destruction of many of our indivisible benefits. Franklin (1990) provides some examples of indivisable benefits such as "justice and peace, as well as clean air, sanitation, drinkable water, safe roads, equal access to education; public institutions,

from courts and schools to regulatory and enforcement systems, developed to do these public tasks (p. 70). Divisable benefits on the other hand are those that can be divided amongst those that took part in the profit. Franklin (1990) provides an example of a garden that a group of friends help to grow. The vegetables from that garden can be shared amongst those that helped. It is therefore divisable.

Franklin (1990) claims that the "public purse has provided the wherewithal from which the private sector derives the divisable benefits, while at the same time the realm from which the indivisable benefits are derived has deteriorated and often remains unprotected" (p. 70).

Productivity & Efficiency

An effect of technology and the values of efficiency and productivity is a narrow view of personal achievement and of progress. Almost all "issues are defined as questions of efficiency" (Winner 1986, p. 46) and very few are defined in terms of their impact on humans or on nature. Efficiency has become a "goal supremely valuable in its own right" (Winner 1986, p. 46).

By highlighting some of the impacts of technology, it is easy to see that technology has been a significant factor in our culture. Technology has also had a direct impact in sport. This next section provides some examples of this impact.

Technology and Sport

"The charisma of sport grows directly out of its promise of limitless performances, and here is where the trouble begins" (Hoberman 1988, p. 319). The technical aspects of sport have advanced significantly over the past twenty to thirty years . All that one needs to do is walk into a sporting goods store or a specialty sports store such as a running shoe store and notice the specialized equipment. There are athletic shoes for most forms of human ambulatory movement including walking, jogging, racing, hiking, aerobics, weight training, basketball, volleyball, soccer and football.

There is also specialized knowledge about how to train physically and mentally for sports. A very recent example of this is the specialized equipment and knowledge that has been applied to the "Acceleration Program" at the University of Alberta. The Acceleration program includes the application of specific training methods and machines to develop the acceleration ability of those involved in sports where power and acceleration are required such as sprinting in athletics or skating sports such as hockey and figure skating. The program involves the use of specific strength training machines such as a skating treadmill and leg press that have been built at angles that exactly simulate the ways in which muscles are stressed in these activities. The sophistication of technologies in sport training enforce Hoberman's (1988) claim that modern sport is "a global monoculture whose values

derive in large measure from the sphere of technology (p. 320).

Not only have the special techniques, tools and knowledge of sport changed in respect to the values of technology. The organization of sport has also changed. There has been a tremendous push in the past twenty five years by the Canadian state for sport organizations to become more rationalized and productive (Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks 1987; Macintosh 1988; Slack 1985). Rationalization is manifested through such things as an increase in standardization and formalized procedures, an increasing functional division of labor, an emphasis on professional qualifications and a separation of personal and organizational responsibilities (Slack, 1985, p.164).

The next chapter outlines these changes in more detail.

Chapter III

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Although my research focuses on the more recent history of Ringette Alberta (1986 to 1995), it is important to situate the sport and the organization historically and in its cultural context. In this chapter I focus on the historical and cultural context in which ringette and Ringette Alberta has been situated. I begin with an outline of the more recent history of Canadian amateur sport and sport organizations in Canada and then describe the development of ringette and of the formative and growth years of Ringette Alberta, from 1976 to 1987.

The Canadian Amateur Sport Delivery System

Many of these changes in Canadian amateur sport can be linked to the increasing involvement and control by the federal and provincial governments. As Hall, Slack, Smith and Whitson (1991) explain:

> Sport in Canadian society clearly has many links to politicians and politics. Many of these linkages have been strengthened over the past three decades by the increasingly direct and sustained intervention of the Canadian state in sport (p. 85).

The literature on Canadian federal government involvement in sport (Macintosh, Bedecki and Franks 1987; Macintosh 1988; Macintosh & Whitson 1990) is traced back primarily to the passing of Bill C-131 in September 1961, An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport. The role of the

federal government in Canadian sport throughout the 1960s was still very "indirect and consisted mainly of a distribution of funds to sport governing bodies and to the provinces in the form of federal/provincial cost-sharing agreements" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 30). The act was "intended to encourage mass participation as well as improve international sport performances" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 30). It was initiated because Canadians "were concerned about their declining place in international hockey and were beginning to become aware of the role of sport in promoting national pride and unity" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 154).

This initial indirect involvement by the federal government did not continue. As Macintosh et al (1987) explain:

> The federal governments motives become much more utilitarian and instrumental in the years that followed (p. 156).

By the late 1960s and following the Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians in 1969, "the federal government embarked on a course of direct, aggressive promotion of elite athletes" (Macintosh 1988, p. 124). There were several compounding reasons for this embarkment by the federal government. One of these factors was the increasing importance of international sporting events such as the Olympics and World Championships. Another was the increasing role of the Canadian government in all aspects of Canadian life including cultural areas such as the arts and sports.

As a result of the recommendations of the Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians in 1969 and the Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians in 1970, the federal government chose to take a very direct role in sport. The initiatives taken by the federal government in the 1970s and 1980s, dramatically changed the power structure of sport in Canada.

Prior to the 1970s, amateur sport organizations were still able to retain control and autonomy of amateur sport but

> by the early 1980s, the federal government was so confident in its primary role in the development of high performance athletes that it could publicly threaten voluntary associations, ostensibly responsible for sport, with removal of government funding. The complete lack of public protests or outcries over this stance suggests that the struggle for autonomy in sport had been decided in favour of the government" (Macintosh, 1988, p. 134).

The were several initiatives that the federal government took that eventually changed the power structure of sport in Canada. The power structure changed hands from volunteer board members of the sport organizations to the sport bureaucrats who included the professional paid staff of national and provincial sport organizations and the professional staff of the various government agencies and government departments that are now responsible for sport. I limit my discussion to the primary initiatives and programs that directly affected the environment of sport organizations in Canada.

At the time of the Report of the Task Force on Sport in

1969, "national sport governing bodies were characterized by part-time volunteer officers and officials, national executives who were drawn typically from only one or two regions of the country, and a high degree of inefficiency and disorganization" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 157). A primary initiative that was taken in order to change this structure of amateur sport organizations was the formation of a federal government arm's-length agency called the National Sport and Recreation Centre (NSRC). The NSRC, located in Ottawa provided "office space and secretarial and other support services" (Macintosh 1988, p. 125) to resident national sport associations. This, as Macintosh et al (1987) stated, "increased greatly the capacity of national sport governing bodies to support the development of their respective activities" (p. 89). The associations were not only subsidized with office and administrative services, they were also provided with grant money from Sport Canada to hire full-time professional staff including Executive Directors and Technical Directors.

Other government arm's-length agencies were developed along with the NSRC in Ottawa in 1971, including the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), Hockey Canada and Participaction Canada. Although none of these agencies were considered to be part of the government bureaucracy, they were all in some way funded by them.

Prior to this time the National Advisory Committee (NAC) was a body established by the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act

of 1961, "to advise the minister of national health and welfare on the implementation of the program" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 31). This changed as the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate grew throughout the 1960s and eventually the NAC "was pushed to the background and sport policy making reverted to the public servants and the minister" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 156). As Macintosh et al (1987) further point out, the "hands off" policy of the early 1960s changed quite dramatically by the end of the decade "when sport assumed a much greater importance and significance in Canadian society" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 156).

Sport Canada, established in 1971 was a new department of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate of the federal government. This department was "to provide Canadians with an opportunity to pursue excellence in competitive sport, and to improve the level of Canadian performances in international sport competitions" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 79). At the same time another department was formed to "provide all Canadians with opportunities to participate in physical recreation and to improve their fitness levels" (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 79). This department was called Recreation Canada.

Other significant initiatives were to take place later in the 1970s and early 1980s. These included the elevation of Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate to deputy minister status in 1973. In the same year

> Game Plan '76 is formally established as a co-operative effort among the Canadian Olympic

> Association, the federal government, the national sport organizations, and the provincial governments. Its purpose is to encourage Olympic sports to set specific goals for achieving better performances and records (Hall et al 1991, p. 91).

Another program that became the responsibility of Sport Canada in 1979 was the Athlete Assistance Program (AAP). The program provided assistance in the form of lost-time income compensation payments and direct-aid programs to Olympic and non-Olympic high performance athletes (Macintosh et al 1987, p. 139).

In 1982 the "Best Ever" program was established. Similar to Game Plan '76, this plan was developed to better prepare Canadian athletes for upcoming Olympic competitions and included an additional $25 million distributed to sports that were participating in the 1988 Winter Olympics hosted in Calgary. In 1984, it was announced that the "Best Ever" program would be extended to the summer sports and would include a further spending of $38 million. This money commitment by the government "carried along with it a requirement on the part of each of the ten NSOs involved to develop a four-year plan which would improve the organization's technical and administrative capacities to produce high-performance athletes" (Macintosh and Whitson 1990, p. 23).

It is also important to recognize the eventual withdrawl of federal responsibilities to Recreation Canada. In 1977, Recreation Canada became Fitness and Recreation Canada.

Following that in 1979, Fitness Canada and Recreation Canada split into two areas and finally in 1980, Recreation Canada was abolished as a federal government department altogether (Macintosh and Whitson 1990, p. 80). Recreational opportunities were to be left to the provinces. It was becoming more and more obvious that the federal government felt that its responsibility was in the area of high performance sport.

Provincial Sport Organizations

At the provincial level, many similar initiatives took place. The success of the Canada Games that had been established in 1967, required that each province select athletes for competition. This, as Macintosh et al (1987) state:

> ... forced provincial departments responsible for recreation and culture to develop a sport arm, and to devote personnel and money to the purpose of organizing, bringing together, and selecting athletes for the Canada Games in collaboration with provincial sport governing bodies. This contributed greatly to the subsequent development of sport bureaucracies in the public service of most provinces in the 1970s (p.37).

For example in Alberta the Percy Page Centre was opened in 1973 (Slack 1983, p. 186) to provide a home for provincial sport and recreation associations.

Changing Structure of Sport Organizations

The direct involvement of the government at all levels

through departments and arms-length government agencies has encouraged and coerced sport organizations to become more organized and rational in their approach to the administration of amateur sport. These organizations have taken on characteristics of a legal-rational bureaucracy (Slack 1985). The characteristics include such things as an

> ... increased number of certification programs and qualification requirements for those who hold office in voluntary organizations, the tendency to appoint paid professional staff "to run" the affairs of these groups, and an increasing standardization and formalization of the systems that constitute this type of organization" (Slack 1985, p. 146).

The intent of taking on a more bureaucratic form is to provide more efficiency in the administration and work of the organization. Macintosh and Whitson (1988) have described this change in Canadian amateur sport organizations as the "rationalized production of performance" (p. 94).

They identify two key factors in this production. The first factor has been the changing nature of physical education programs that were at one time focused on education foundations. The programs have detached themselves from these and are now focusing on the new disciplines of sport management and sport science that are focused on human performance in sport (Macintosh & Whitson 1990, p. 129). The graduates of these new programs have become the primary decision makers in the Canadian sport bureaucracy. They are the executive directors, technical directors and program coordinators of the Provincial and National Sport

Associations and of the government arm's-length agencies.

This "clearly coincided with the projects of those politicians and sports people who were committed, for a variety of reasons, to increasing Canada's standing in the world of international sport" (Whitson & Macintosh 1988, p. 83). Since the 1960s the international sporting environment that Canadian athletes and teams compete in has become very challenging. The fact that Canada was not having success in international events and the fact that key government agents in the 1970s felt that sport could be used as a way of promoting our national political ideologies became a factor in the production of a very systematic technical and support structure for sport organizations. This systematic sport bureaucracy includes the NSOs and PSOs, the paid professional staff that work for these organizations and whose salaries are highly subsidized through the respective levels of government agencies and the many arm's-length agencies of the government such as the NSRC and the Coaching Association of Canada at the national level and what used to be the Alberta Sport Council at the provincial level.

As I stated above the entire sport bureaucracy is subsidized in some form by the various levels of government. Sport organizations have become very dependent on the government and the many government agencies that make up the sport delivery system in Canada for financial and administrative resources.

It seems obvious but is very important to emphasize that

government involvement in sport did not just play a role in the development of high performance sport. The contribution and focus of government on high performance sport has pushed other sport issues to the back burner.

> The federal government dominates sport policy-making in Canada. It focuses these policies towards the further development of its corps of "state" athletes at the expense of expanding participatory sport opportunities. As well, these policies are carried out to the detriment of redressing inequalities in participation according to gender, socio-economic status, physical and other handicaps, and additional conditions considered to be disadvantages by some sectors of society (Macintosh 1988, p. 138).

The beginnings of Ringette Alberta have taken place within these new structures of sport as they have been set out by the Canadian sport bureaucracy and by the increasing utilitarian values of our society. Before I present the results and analysis of my research of Ringette Alberta from 1986 to 1995, I provide some background information about the development of the game of ringette as well as the early history of the organization in its formative and growth years.

Ringette History

The beginnings of the sport go back to 1963, when a Recreation Director from North Bay, Ontario developed "a winter, team sport for girls" (S.D.M.R. 1965). At the time, the unofficial Canadian team sport of ice hockey was not acceptable for girls to play. In the 1960s participation by

girls and women in physical activity and sport was proportionally very low compared to their male counterpart. A winter team sport on ice developed specifically for females provided opportunities for girls and women to participate in what was a more acceptable winter team sport. These opportunities were not available prior to 1963.

In 1963, the central philosophy behind the development of ringette was the same as it was for the modified "girls rules" basketball that was developed in 1892. "Girls rules" basketball confined girls to a limited amount of space on the playing court so that the "players could not run all over the court and become exhausted" (Spears 1991, p.24). The rules of ringette were developed with an assumption that girls have limited physical capabilities. The game of ringette was a modified version of the men's game of ice hockey. For thirty years (1963 to 1993) ringette players were confined to certain zones (although a larger zone) on the ice. The arguments for those zone restrictions were that they "encouraged team play" (Varpalotai 1991, introduction) and that it makes the "game fast-moving and wide-open" (Ontario Ringette Association 1976). These arguments are contradictory in that when the ring is in one end of the ice "four out of ten players are practically idle" (Marcotte 1984, p.10) and as well a player often can not play a ring that is closest to her because she is proscribed from entering a particular zone.

In "girls rules" basketball "features of the men's game

were removed to avoid overexertion" (Paul 1991, p. 42) and to remove the "masculine" image of the sport. By removing many of what could be called the masculine aspects of the sport of ice hockey such as body contact, ringette became an acceptable alternative and an opportunity for girls to participate in a winter team sport.

Ringette has also grown to be a game that is very unique, skillful and fast. Other than ice hockey and bandy, ringette is the only other sport that requires movement and the carrying out of skills on skates. Anyone who has attempted or imagined to move at any speed and stay in control while balancing on a blade that is approximately 2 mm wide and anywhere between 180 cm and 250 cm long (depending on how big or small your feet are) can appreciate this skill. While on skates, participants are carrying out other skills that allow their own team to score such as ringhandling, shooting, passing and receiving and preventing their opponents from scoring by stick checking, intercepting passes and saving shots. These skills are what make ringette unique but as well these skills require and develop physical abilities such as balance, strength, speed, endurance, power and coordination.

Today the game of ringette is still played primarily by girls and women at the recreational levels, although it has grown to include more competitive opportunities such as the Canadian Ringette Championships that started in 1979 and the Canada Winter Games, a competition for highly skilled

developing ringette players under the age of 17 years. Ringette has grown in other countries as well such as Finland, Sweden, France and the United States. It was with Finland that Ringette Canada established the International Ringette Federation (IRF) in 1986. In 1990, the IRF hosted the first World Ringette Championships. Some growth has also occurred with the men's ringette. The Ontario Ringette Association hosted their first men's provincial championships in 1994. Although ringette may still be considered a marginal sport because of its feminine "ette" name, it has also established itself as a great game in which to participate.

At the time I do not think that the founding "fathers" of ringette considered the possibilities of the development of ringette beyond a participatory type of sport. The reason for participating in ringette was not for another end or goal such as winning but was an end in itself. The assumption was still at this time that girls and women were "better suited for cooperative, rather than competitive, types of play" (Varpalotai 1991, p. 27).

It was more than a decade after the game of ringette was developed in Canada that it emerged in the province of Alberta. It is the early formative and growth years of Ringette Alberta that I examine in the next section.

Ringette Alberta's First Decade of Growth (1976-1986)

The sport of ringette established itself in the province

of Alberta in the mid 1970s. Shortly after that in February 1976 Ringette Alberta became incorporated as the official governing body for ringette in the province.

Growth of the organization has occurred in sheer numbers of participants. There has been a concomitant growth in the size, administrative and program functions of the organization. In what follows I highlight some of these changes as they occurred between the incorporation in February, 1976 and the Annual General Meeting in April, 1986.

At the end of Ringette Alberta's first full year of existence in 1976-77, it served approximately three hundred players playing in six communities within the province. Within ten years, at the 1986 Annual General Meeting, the membership had increased to 3109 players playing in thirty seven communities within the province.

The mission statement of the association in 1976 was "to promote the playing of ringette as a mass participation team sport for girls and women within the province" (RA Bylaws 1976). This mission change slightly in the years to follow and read "to promote and foster wider participation for the growth and development of ringette in the province of alberta in the interest of sportsmanship and friendship for girls" (RA Development Plan 1983-85).

In the first couple of years of Ringette Alberta's existence it was mostly a small group of parents with daughters who formed the nucleus of the organization. During this time, ringette was played in Edmonton, Sherwood Park,

Leduc, Stettler, Big Valley and Lacombe. The commitment of the organization and this small nucleus of people was to publicize and provide information about ringette to various communities throughout the province. There was very little written information about formalized plans or standardized job descriptions for the executive until 1979. The meetings seemed to be very casual with very few differences of opinion being expressed.

Up until 1981, ringette was played primarily by girls between the ages of ten to seventeen years in Alberta. These girls played in one of two age divisions: Tween or Belle. By 1979, the Belle division had split into two age divisions, Junior Belle and Belle. In 1982, a few more age divisions were added to accommodate the increasing membership. These included a division for women eighteen years of age and over.

In 1979, Ringette Canada hosted the first Canadian Ringette Championships in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In order to select two Alberta teams to represent the province at the first national championship in the two designated age divisions, Ringette Alberta hosted its first provincial championship. It was at this time that RA began to categorize their teams not only according to age level but also according to level of play. For example the teams that competed at the provincial championships for the first few championships were categorized as "all-star" or representative teams while teams that did not compete at this level were classified as "houseleague". This tiering system

remained in place until 1987 when a more common tiering system was put in place that included "A", "B", and "C" categories in each age division.

Right from the initiation of RA, the board was responsible for the organizing of technical clinics. The first coaching clinic was held in Sherwood Park in December 1976. The two instructors for this first clinic were from the Ontario Ringette Association. In the following season, five clinics were held and they involved both coaches and officials. By the end of the 1985-86 season, the procedures and guidelines for both the coaching and officiating clinics were well established. The coaching program was affiliated with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) and consisted of two levels of certification. The officials program, entitled the National Officials Certification Program (NOCP) was also well established and consisted of three levels of certification. Ringette Alberta hosted approximately 8 coaching clinics (ninety four coaches) at Level I and approximately two or three Level 2 clinics(nine coaches). On the officiating side, there were fourteen Community Level clinics (two hundred and nine officials) and 3 Regional clinics (thirty two officials) held.

In order to accommodate the increasing number of players, age divisions and levels of play in the province, Ringette Alberta also expanded and specialized its volunteer, technical positions. From the Association's inception in 1976, the organization operated with the following volunteer

positions: President, Vice-President, Past-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and up to four Directors as required. At the Annual General Meeting of Ringette Alberta in 1979, the executive made a decision to increase the number of positions on the board. The position of Secretary-Treasurer was split into two positions; Secretary, and Treasurer. Two technical positions were added; a Director of Sport Development, and a Director of Officials. As well, eight zone directors representing eight designated areas within Alberta were to be appointed by the respective zone.

The revenue of the association for the year ending January 31, 1977 was $6,585.00 (RA AGM Minutes, April 2, 1977), with expenditures of just under $4,000.00. By the AGM in 1986, the association was responsible for revenue of almost $65,000.00 (RA AGM Minutes, April 26, 1986)

Although the records show that the association has always received funding from the Provincial government, there were no records of a Profile and Application for Financial Assistance to Recreation Associations[1] until 1980. In 1976, RA received $3,000 in the form of a provincial grant (RA AGM Minutes April 2, 1977). In the 1985-86 season the association for the first time received two separate grants,

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[1] The Profile and Application for Financial Assistance to Recreation Associations is an annually required application completed by each provincial sport association. This document contains an application for financial assistance and the associations future development plans. It also includes a post program analysis from prior years' programs complete with financial accounting, updated organization structure and updated executive list with date of term commencement and an Executive Summary outlining major changes to the associations plan.

one from the Alberta Sport Council for just over $14,000 and one from Alberta Parks and Recreation for the same amount (RA AGM Minutes, April 2, 1977).

It was in April, 1984 that the Alberta Sport Council was formed as a provincial government arm's-length organization that was responsible for the distribution of Lottery Funds to provincial sport associations in the area of technical development including the hiring of technical paid staff. The formation of the Alberta Sport Council provided for the association an opportunity to receive funding to hire paid staff. The hiring of the first paid staff is one of the primary initiatives that I have identified in this research project. In the following chapter I look more closely at this initiative as well as others that have been significant to Ringette Alberta well into its second decade of existence.

Table 1

Membership and Financial Development of Ringette Alberta

Season	# Member Associations	# of Members	Expenses
76-77	6	383	$3,652.00
77-78	DNA	771	$7,800.00
78-79	DNA	1013	$5,420.00
79-80	12	271*	$9,149.00
80-81	6	930	**
81-82	16	1428	$23,467.00
82-83	27	1630	$26,001.00
83-84	DNA	2147	$28,778.00
84-85	DNA	2602	$51,567.00
85-86	37	3109	$80,502.00
86-87	53	3147	$108,947.00
87-88	60	3476	$94,351.00
88-89	61	3464	DNA
89-90	58	3360	$191,432.00
90-91***	59	3487	$298,127.00
91-92	69	3919	DNA
92-93	68	4109	$293,268.00
93-94	67	4181	$299,697.00
94-95	53	4008	$316,228.00

DNA Data Not Available

* First Season that RA had an official registrar

** Audit year changed from January 31 to December 31

*** Audit year changed from December 31 to April 30

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Ringette Alberta in 1995

In 1995, Ringette Alberta serves just over four thousand participants. The organization had expenditures that were close to $325,000.00 in 1994-95.

The organization is run by a board of seventeen directors and employs two full-time and one part-time staff. The staff work out of an office in the Percy Page Centre in Edmonton, a building complex that houses many of the Provincial Sport Associations.

Joining the Canadian Sport Bureaucracy

During Ringette Alberta's second decade of existence there have been some key initiatives. These initiatives are significant in terms of this study because they have escalated RA into the mainstream of the Canadian amateur sport bureaucracy system but also because they are significant in terms of the features of technology that were described in the second chapter. I utilize the term initiatives rather than changes because I am attempting to determine if these initiatives have created changes that can be linked to the features of our technological culture.

I focus on the following initiatives: the establishment of a permanent office in August 1986 and the concurrent hiring of the first professional paid staff and the establishment of two provincial high performance teams and programs. I am not claiming a cause and effect type

relationship between these initiatives and changes within the organization. The initiatives undertaken by the organization do, however, set a framework and establish values for the organization and its subsequent activities and goals.

As I have previously stated in chapter three, the time period prior to 1986 was a period of rapid growth for ringette in the province. The changes in the organization at that time were based on the increasing demands of the growing ringette population in Alberta. As the growth of ringette began to stabilize in the late 1980s the organization began to take on new initiatives and tasks. Although there was little quantitative growth in terms of the number of participants, there was definitely qualitative gain in the organizations activities. I believe that this is what Fred Jones[2] , a Zone Director for Ringette Alberta in 1987 and again in 1994 was referring to when he said "there was no question that that was a real growth period" during his first term with Ringette Alberta (Interview, June 30, 1995). Even the Association's first employee, Susan MacDonald noticed this gain, "after that first year, after I became full time permanent, I think things kind of really took off" (Interview, June 26, 1995).

Initiative I: Establishing an Office & Paid Staff

The hiring of Susan MacDonald, the Association's first

2The names used in this thesis to identify board members of the organization are fictitious.

paid staff in the position of Technical Coordinator in August, 1986 is the first initiative of importance to the organization. In conjunction with hiring their first paid staff member, the association also established its first permanent office. The Percy Page Centre in St. Albert was the residence of several other provincial sport associations at the time but there was not enough space for Ringette Alberta to move in. The association was provided alternate office space until the Percy Page Centre was relocated into a larger building in Edmonton in the summer of 1987 (RA Executive Meeting Minutes, July, 1987). At that time, Ringette Alberta moved into the centre with the majority of other provincial sport associations.

As was discussed in chapter three, providing office space for sport organizations began at the national level in 1970 through the impetus of the Federal governments Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians in 1969 and the subsequent proposed Sport Policy in 1970. In Alberta provision of offices began in 1973. Although it was over ten years after many other associations had already established permanent offices, Ringette Alberta's move to have a permanent office came from the initiatives of their provincial government consultant, Judy Falcon, their President, Tim Ranier and their Treasurer, Randy Stewart. The association had completed a planning session and needs assessment in December 1984 under the leadership of University of Alberta, sport management and planning

specialists. From the planning session it was proposed that a part-time Executive Director and a Technical Director be hired. In the 1986 Profile and Application for Financial Assistance to Sport Associations, RA requested funds for hiring a part-time Technical Coordinator. The part-time funding for this position came through in June, 1986. The position was partly subsidized through an increase in player registration fees. The President explained the funding for the part-time position and the need for the association to supplement the grant supplied by the Alberta Sport Council at the 1986 Annual General Meeting

> ...the Alberta Sports Council has provided some funding to enable Ringette Alberta to hire a part time staff member. The association is expected to raise funds to offset some of the costs incurred when hiring staff (RA Annual General Meeting Minutes, April 26, 1986).

He then suggested an increase of $2.00 for player registration fees and that this "would provide reasonable extra funds to improve service to member associations" (RA Annual General Meeting Minutes, April 26, 1986). Twenty-seven members present were in favor and two were opposed. As the President wrote in his report, the hiring of a paid staff

> ...was a big step forward for ringette and will enable us to better serve our members' needs and be more active in promoting ringette throughout the province (RA President's Report, April 26, 1986)

Soon after MacDonald was hired and began work in August 1986 as a part-time Technical Coordinator, it became apparent that there was going to be more than part-time work to do.

As she states:

> It shortly or quickly moved from 3/4 time to a full time job and the terms were now not just from September to March or April but that there was going to be work during the summer (Interview, June 26, 1995).

The hiring of a paid staff member was seen as an enabling type of initiative. There was an overwhelming agreement of this with all of the board members that I interviewed. As board member Karen Frank said "I think it was a great move and one that was much needed" (Interview, July 11, 1995). The office also provided a central location for the flow of information and resources. As Peggy Flint a present board member of RA stated,

> To have permanent roots someplace. I think it impacts 110%. People phone and they at least know that they are going to get somebody rather than somebody's answering machine" (Interview, June 25, 1995).

Another Board member, Bob Andrews who was also a member at the time of the opening of the office, stated that "we had someone there all the time that could answer questions" (Interview, June 27, 1995). This excitement about the office and the possibilities that it seems to offer are common. At the national level when Ringette Canada established a permanent office and moved into the National Sport and Recreation Centre in Ottawa in 1982, the following comments were made in the national newsletter.

> Achieving residency at the NSRC is an objective which Ringette Canada has been striving for ever since its inception in 1975. It is almost a second beginning for the national sports governing body.

> Ringette will be at elbow's length from the other important resident sports, in the company of such long-established organizations as the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, the Canadian Soccer Association and the Canadian Amateur Baseball Association. We are, so to speak, finally in the Canadian sports mainstream (Mayenknecht 1982, p. 4).

Having a permanent office and a full-time employee was seen as very positive initiative for the association and all of its members. As the examples below indicate, in a very short time the volunteer board members and the membership at large have become very dependent on having a permanent office and the the paid staff to provide information and resources.

Within a few years of her initial hiring, MacDonald seemed to be doing more and more of the Associations' administrative work including activities such as player registrations, coaching, officiating and player development clinic administration, resource distribution and record keeping of minutes, correspondence and, policies. One board member stated that:

> I think that it was absolutely necessary for the sport to develop to here and that the more administrative straight forward functions be dealt with at an administrative office level rather than by volunteers on a board (Karen Frank Interview, July 11, 1995).

Another idea that board member Ross expressed is that:

> ...until you get up to the point where you have paid staff working on this you can't accomplish much. All that you can accomplish is the three hours a night that the volunteer can put into this. You look at some of the other provinces that don't have provincial offices to speak of, they are just out of Betty's basement. We have a huge advantage.

(Interview, June 27, 1995).

Paid employees have access to many of the resources, including at least 8 hours per day of time that make the carrying out of the association's tasks much easier than it would be for a volunteer. As an employee of Ringette Alberta I have access five days a week or more to toll free telephones, photocopiers, fax machines, computers, printers, letter folders, stamps, couriers, contact names and numbers. As well as these technological devices, I also have access to people who work in the same field everyday including other provincial sport associations in Alberta as well as other provincial and national ringette offices.

In 1986-87, the registrar was a volunteer position. In the following year, the Technical Coordinator took over this function and role. In 1986-87, the volunteer registrar was responsible for over three thousand registrations. Karen Frank talks about this position that has now been taken over by paid staff:

> I can't imagine someone for example taking the voluntary position of registrar and doing that on a volunteer basis at this stage. That would be just too much to ask of anybody (Interview, July 11, 1995).

In less than ten years, the volunteer board members and general membership have become very reliant on the administrative functions that the paid staff perform. Any other way of carry out these tasks seems to be "just a backwards sort of thing" (Tony Ross Interview, June 27,

1995).

Since the opening of the office there has also been more emphasis placed on the keeping of association data and records. As Flint stated in her interview, "who is going to keep more than two years back and haul a filing cabinet around" (Interview June 25, 1995)? MacDonald talks about the beginning of her employment with the association and stated that "the input of data, creating files and history of the association became important to the organization" (Interview June 26, 1995).

Another administrative task that the Technical Coordinator took control over and became responsible for was the completion of the Profile and Application For Financial Assistance to Sport Associations. This document is submitted to the Alberta Sport Council and Alberta government each year in order for the organization to receive administrative and technical funding. Susan Macdonald, the Technical Coordinator, talks about how she took over this function.

> In the beginning the board worked with me and put it together and then it became increasingly more of my responsibility. Maybe people didn't make the connection or they didn't realize how important it was and that it affected everything (Interview June 26, 1995).

Although not on the same scale as the Quadrennial planning process that has been a requirement, since the early 1980s of national sport organizations that compete at the Olympic games (Macintosh et al 1987), the Profile and Application document has some similarities. The Profile and

Application for funding has been a requirement for provincial sport associations in Alberta since at least 1980. The document typically contains an evaluation of the previous years planning and budgeting as well as ongoing and future plans of the association in administrative, leadership and program areas. Most other provinces have similar requirements and criteria that they must meet in order to receive funding.

This profile and application is quite an extensive document for the association to undertake each year. For example in 1994-95, the document included over eighty pages of material. The fact that the paid staff became primarily responsible for this task is reasonable since paid staff has more time and resources compared to volunteers. An employee would also be more self interested in the completion of this document because it allows the association to not only access funds for technical programs but also the funds that pay their salary. The importance and understanding of the Profile document that Susan Macdonald stated as well as my own understanding of its importance is not necessarily felt by the volunteer board members. As one member stated,

> ...the board may have sat down and gone through the profile once. I think it was that the profile was due on this date and we are sitting down on this date, so whoever can make it please be there (Interview, July 11, 1995).

Another role that the Technical Coordinator became more responsible for was for the administration of the technical

programs of the association. Macdonald really relied on the technial expertise of the volunteers that took on the technical positions of the association including the Director of Officials and the Director of Sport Development. Macdonald claimed that:

> They were the technical experts in the sport. Dave Chambers was Director of Officials at that time and he was awesome. He was an official and that was his drive" (Interview, June 26, 1995).

A few of the board members that I interviewed stated, that RA had strong coaching and officiating programs. MacDonald who now works for another provincial sport association, says that

> even through rough times their programs were strong. From working with other sports,the coaching program was strong and it was progressing (Interview, June 26, 1995).

A report on coaching clinics hosted in 1985-86 indicate that approximately one hundred coaches took part in the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Level 1 and 2 Technical programs (RA Sport Development Report, April 26, 1986). By the end of the 1989-90 season, there was not a significant change. In that year there were nine Level 1 clinics and two Level 2 clinics (RA Sport Development Report, April 28, 1990).

In officiating, there were fourteen clinics hosted at the Community Level (Level 1), three at the Regional Level (Level 2) in 1985-86. In total, there were four hundred and eight officials registered with the association (RA Director

of Officials Report, April 26, 1986). During the 1989-90 season, there were nineteen Level 1 clinics and nine refresher clinics with a total of three hundred and seventy seven officials registered with the association (RA Director of Officials Report, April 28, 1990).

Again in sport outreach there was very little change in numbers of participants. In 1985-86, over three hundred players participated in seventeen sport outreach programs (RA Director of Sport Development Report, April 26, 1986). Numbers for 1989-90 season showed that twenty one sport outreach clinics were held (RA Director of Sport Development Report, April 28, 1990).

In the registration report for the 1985-86 season, the total membership of the association was listed at three thousand and nine (RA Registration Report, April 26, 1986). At the 1990 Annual General Meeting the membership was listed at three thousand, three hundred and sixty (RA Registration Report, January, 1990) with the majority of the increase occurring at the Deb and Ladies level where membership was eighty five in 1986 and at two hundred and sixteen in 1990.

Although the intent of hiring a Technical Coordinator was to better promote the sport in the province, in looking at the programs and membership of the association I would conclude that very little quantitative changes occurred at this time. Most of the changes that occurred with the association were qualitative changes. One of these changes was to administer two provincial team programs.

It was in September 1988, that the announcement came from Ringette Canada that ringette would be played at the Canada Winter Games in 1991. Later that year it was also announced that the first World Ringette Championships would be held in Canada in 1990. These two high performance ringette events added yet another tier or level of teams to Ringette Alberta's membership structure. Both of these events required provincial teams and programs.

Initiative II: Provincial Teams & Programs

Ringette Alberta's planning for the Canada Winter Games program began in the fall of 1988. The plan was initiated by a couple of key individuals on the board in 1988 as well as the program coordinator (formerly the technical coordinator).

As Macintosh et al (1987) indicate, the Canada Games

> ...forced provincial departments responsible for recreation and culture to develop a sport arm, and to devote personnel and money to the purpose of organizing, bringing together, and selecting athletes for the Canada Games in collaboration with the provincial sport governing bodies (Macintosh et al 1987, p.37).

The funding for Alberta's Canada Games programs came primarily from what was called a Canada Games Enrichment Grant directly from the the Alberta Sport Council. Over a two and a half year period, the program received approximately $80,000.00 (RA Profile and Application for Financial Assistance, March 1, 1989) and this did not include any actual travel, accommodation or food expenses for the

actual event that was held in Prince Edward Island.

For Ringette Alberta, the Canada Games program was seen as an extremely positive initiative for a couple of reasons. First the program was highly subsidized from the Alberta Sport Council and required only a minimal funds, if any from Ringette Alberta. Secondly, the program was for developing ringette players.

The World's program that was initiated at approximately the same time, on the other hand was a bit of a concern as one board member reflects:

> I think that the CWG wasn't as much of an issue because it was largely a funded program. It was great for them because it was giving exposure at no cost. Where as the World's program was great exposure but there was a cost element to it. So that there seemed to be a lot more second guessing about whether the Worlds program was worth it. (Karen Frank Interview, July 11, 1995)

Over the one and a half years of the World's program, the finances were close to $70,000.00 with very little of that coming from specific grants from the Alberta Sport Council. Therefore, the cost financially to the association and to the individual player was much greater than the Canada Games program. A great deal of hype and excitement was generated about the Canada Winter Games and the World's at the national level and at the provincial level. Both Alberta provincial teams were successful in their bid to obtain gold medals in their respective events. Ringette Alberta had begun by this time to establish itself as a provincial powerhouse in ringette.

Of the ringette players who were members of those two high performance teams, 100% of them resided in or in close proximity to the two major centers of Edmonton or Calgary. The intention of these programs was never to eliminate opportunities for ringette players in rural communities. However the structures of ringette provide an advantage to those who live in or very close to major urban centers such as Calgary or Edmonton because of the concentration of players and access to resources such as skating rinks and coaches. Although it is more pronounced in sports that hire professional elite coaches, similar patterns of urban dominance in high level sport exists in sports where professional coaching is less established as well (Whitson and Macintosh 1990, p. 48).

Another "high performance" sport initiative that was brought forward at the Annual General Meeting in 1988, was a proposal from the University of Calgary and Esso Petroleum about the development of a ringette school of excellence (RA Executive Meeting Minutes April 29, 1988). Nothing seemed to come of the proposal and even the board members I interviewed did not have knowledge of the results. There was definitely some apprehension about this proposal as the following minutes read:

> Much discussion followed to try and determine the effect this proposal would have on the non-elite players in Alberta (RA Executive Meeting Minutes April 29, 1988).

The conflicting issues of high-performance sport and

recreational sport has been common throughout the 30 years of the changing power structure of Canadian amateur sport as was discussed in the previous chapter. With Ringette Alberta, the addition of these two provincial team programs did seem to create some conflicts between board members about issues relating to these programs. Macdonald, remembers that

> ...the board at that time was fairly developmentally focused. The difference between the Canada Games caliber and recreational caliber was an issue (Interview, June 26, 1995).

A board member who was directly involved on the committee that was responsible for the World Championship program mentioned how

> ... when the Winter Games and the World's came along people were complaining -"we're putting too much money out on fourteen or fifteen athletes" (Andrews Interview, June 27, 1995).

Another board member disagreed with all of the complaining about all of the money being spent on 'AA' ringette.

> I don't think that is fair. They are not putting it into perspective. If you look at the dollars that are expended by RA to stage the 'AA' versus all of the others and the dollars per participant, people would be astounded (Jones Interview, June 28, 1995).

He felt that there were a lot more resources being put into the less competitive levels of the sport than the membership of RA realized.

Andrews mentioned in his interview that it was important that the board not be

> ... afraid to fund both ends of the spectrum. That was another reason that they came up with 'C' provincials. It is a good idea because then they have a level that they can compete with (Andrews Interview, June 27, 1995).

The hosting of the first 'C' provincials took place in the 1989-90 season. Between 1986 and 1990, there was a significant increase in the number of provincial championships hosted by Ringette Alberta despite the fact that the actual membership of the association changed very little during this time period. In 1986-87, Ringette Alberta hosted provincial championships for two different levels of competition ('A' and 'B') and for differing age levels. In total there were seven provincial championship tournaments that year (RA Director of Officials Report, April 26, 1986). In 1989-90, Ringette Alberta hosted thirteen championship tournaments for three different levels of competition ('A', 'B' and 'C') and for an increasing number of age divisions (RA Director of Tournaments Report, April 29, 1990).

Prior to the initiation of two provincial ringette teams and programs there seemed to be a cohesive group of board members. Bob Andrews indicated that he felt strongly "that we (the board members) did some good things for the sport and that we were of one view, basically the betterment of the sport" (Interview, June 27, 1995). As another board member stated

> ...no one was perfect and everyone was learning but they were all trying to achieve the same thing. There were frustrating times and heated discussions at the board level then too but we had more of a sense that we were accomplishing something in the

right direction (Frank Interview, July 11, 1995).

The same impression was provided by the Technical Coordinator, as Susan Macdonald says

> ...those early years were really good, from 1986 to probably 1989,they all wanted the same things and they wanted to see it grow and develop and promote it within Alberta. They might have had their kids involved or they might have had their own club but their focus was Ringette Alberta and to see it grow (Interview, June 26, 1995).

This cohesive group did not last. Subsequent minutes and correspondence of the association show signs of conflict, bitterness and confusion amongst the board members and paid staff. This was also reflected in the interviews that I conducted. Surprisingly as the the Technical Coordinator said about the success that Alberta teams were having at the nationals, Canada Winter Games and the World Championships

> What is ironic about that is that despite all the turmoil that was going on the strength of it was the players (Macdonald Interview, June 26, 1995).

Turmoil and Success

Having the permanent office and the hiring of a paid staff was not without its difficulties. "The downside was that everyone thought that the office person could do everything" (Bob Andrews Interview, June 27, 1995). As Susan MacDonald stated, "in the beginning it was difficult to know what to do everyday, I was new and they had never had a staff person before" (Interview June 26, 1995). Between 1986 and 1988 these initial difficulties seemed to work themselves out

but by the late 1980s there were some subtle changes that started to occur that "then escalated into a nightmare" (Susan MacDonald Interview, June 26, 1995). Although it is not my intent to over-emphasize these controversial issues, it is important to note them in order to understand the big picture and the purpose of RA's existence.

> There was a lot of things happening and there was a lot of different groups within the board that wanted different things. They couldn't put aside those things for the betterment of ringette (Susan MacDonald Interview, June 26, 1995).

At the AGM in 1990, a few of the longer standing board members did not return or resigned from their positions. Bob Andrews talked about leaving the organization.

> It was at that point where if you continued you wouldn't get anything accomplished. There is a number of you that are trying to go forward and a number that are going backwards, it doesn't work (Interview, June 27, 1995).

The particular controversy was about a Zone Director who RA had removed from his position due to some questionable expense claims. By the end of the 1990-91 season there were several more long standing board members who did not return. As well the board presented a motion to approve a budget that included the hiring of a Technical Director. Hidden within that budget were insufficient funds to keep the Program Co-ordinator.

A Technical Director was hired in August of 1991 and by October of the same year that individual was gone and another new Technical Director was hired. Included in the 1991

budget was provision for the association to hire an Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant was to be responsible for the keeping of minutes, correspondence and filing. Following the 1991-92 season, the Administrative Assistant was given the responsibility for the day to day accounting of the association.

Having more staff available, allowed more of the associations activities to be centralized at the office in Edmonton. Having the office in Edmonton seemed to be a contentious issue in the early 1990s with some of the members from Calgary. Susan Macdonald, the first Technical Coordinator mentioned this issue.

> There were some feelings from Calgary that the RA office, because it was in Edmonton, that I was doing a lot work for Edmonton. I think that the Calgary and south felt slighted because of it (Interview, June 26, 1995).

Since the formation of the office in 1986, the volunteer board positions other than the zone directors have been primarily filled by individuals from Zones 5 and 6 (64%). Zone 5 is the area surrounding Edmonton that includes Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Ft. Saskatchewan, Bon Accord and Spruce Grove. This zone has filled approximately 46% of the board positions. Zone 6 is the urban center of Edmonton and they have filled approximately 18% of the possible board positions in this time period.

On the ice, Alberta teams continued to do well at national level competitions. In total, between 1988 and

1995, Alberta has won 10 gold medals and several other medal standing positions at the Canadian Ringette Championships. The 1991-92 season saw an Alberta provincial team win the right to attend the second World Championships in Finland. The Alberta team came home with the gold medal from Finland as well.

Due to the success of Ringette Alberta's Canada Winter Games Program in 1991, the Alberta Sport Council provided Ringette Alberta with funding for a part-time Provincial Coach. Leading up to the 1995 Canada Winter Games, the position received quarter time funding in 1992, half-time funding in 1993 and full-time funding in 1994 up until the Canada Games in February, 1995. The part-time Provincial Coach was hired in December, 1992.

By December, 1992, Ringette Alberta was operating with two full time and one part-time staff members. Yet they were only responsible for one of the full-time salaries. The other two positions were funded almost entirely by technical leadership grants from the Alberta Sport Council.

By January, 1993, the Technical Director who was hired less than a year and half earlier in October 1992 had resigned because of conflicts with some of the volunteer board members. Another Technical Director was not hired until August, 1994. In the one and a half year period when there was no Technical Director, the Administrative Assistant took over the duties of the Technical Director and was titled the 'Acting Technical Director'. Work piled up as one might

imagine. One administrative area that seemed to be effected the most was financial control. The association was by 1994-95, responsible for revenue and expenditures exceeding $300,000.00. There was a great deal of money going through the office but at the same time no one person was really taking responsibility for the cash flow. This came to the forefront at the 1993 AGM and again at the 1994 AGM. By the time the new Technical Director started in August 1994, it would take until December of the same year for her and the new Treasurer to straighten out the books and to put some financial control mechanisms in place.

With all of the office changes happening at Ringette Alberta, the volunteer board seemed to lose its team concept. One of the board members who was involved in 1991-92 and then again in 1994-95 described the difference between his two terms.

> Admittedly, some members of the board worked their butts off for the sport. Endless hours, huge determination, zero team skills. They ended up doing most of the work but they did because they couldn't bring anyone along to help them. They made decisions on their own (Tony Ross Interview, June 27, 1995).

One issue that seemed to be at the forefront was the computer issue.

> ...it is an internal fight like the old board used to do. Fighting about what kind of computer to put in the office. That is not going to advance the sport. It is not an important issue. It is a side issue. Get over it (Tony Ross Interview, June 27, 1995).

With the election of a new board at the 1994 AGM, there seemed to be some obvious adjusting that was to be done with the organization. One of the decisions that was made was to change the structure of the board slightly. The new structure included a new hierarchical level of Executive. The new Executive included the President, Vice-President and Treasurer. These three positions became responsible for the day to day operations of the association including the office staff. The Board included the Executive as well as the other Director positions. They were responsible for the larger policy, program, leadership and administrative issues.

The beginning of the 1994-95 term in the spring and early summer of 1994 was clean up time. Since August 1994, and the hiring of the new Technical Director the association seems to be on more stable ground.

Since the taking on of new initiatives, Ringette Alberta has been through many significant changes. In a study conducted by Kikulis, Slack, Hinings and Zimmerman (1989) entitled A Structural Taxonomy of Amateur Sport Organizations, Ringette Alberta was grouped in a cluster entitled 'Volunteer Structure'. In this group

> Decision making is centralized and shows high levels of volunteer involvement. These organizations probably most closely resemble the traditional voluntary sport organizations. That is to say, they exhibit emergent, situationally specific, and interdependent tasks requiring cooperation and overlapping skills. Although the process of decision making is centralized, it allows for considerable input from the volunteer specialists who are central to the organizations' functioning (p. 144).

In the mid 1980s Ringette Alberta took on some initiatives that centralized the operation of the association in Edmonton and also developed a couple of high performance teams. Until more recently though in 1994, the organizations structure and functioning remained relatively the same throughout this time. As the association moved into the 1990s, there were struggles and misunderstandings about responsibilities, priorities and tasks amongst the board members themselves but also between the volunteers and the paid staff. As the association enters into the second half of the 1990s, it is difficult to predict what might happen. I explore Ringette Alberta's future in the final chapter. In the section to follow, I discuss the above information about Ringette Alberta in terms of the features of technology.

The Features of Technology

As Franklin (1990) stated, "the technology of doing something can define the activity itself, and by doing so, precludes the emergence of other ways of doing 'it'" (p. 17).

The addition of a permanent office and paid employee as well as the emergence of two provincial team programs has done very little in terms of changing the quantitative numbers within programs and membership or the structure of the organization. These factors alone do not mean that these initiatives have not been significant. These initiatives have established new priorities and new directions for the

association even if these priorities and new directions have not been written down.

These changes have been significant to the provincial sport bureaucracy that oversees Ringette Alberta. The fact that RA was provided funding for a part-time provincial coach in 1992 demonstrates that RA has been accepted as a legitimate sport organization in the eyes of this provincial sport bureaucracy. Ringette is not just a sport that offers an opportunity for girls to participate in a winter team game. It is now a sport that is played at the Canada Winter Games and for two Canada Games in succession the Alberta ringette team has produced ten flag points.

Franklin (1984) talks about how the technological system

> ... emphasizes personal achievement and quantifies it like machine output. The notion of productivity, developed as a figure of merit for specific mechanical processes, is increasingly applied, like 'brownie points' to wide and diverse sectors of society (p.7).

Although Ringette Alberta does not have the same international or national sport status as the national sport organizations that Whitson and Macintosh (1988) have researched, they have still moved in the same directions as these high profile sports organizations. The move towards a more professional and rational organization not only creates opportunities - it can sometimes limit opportunities as well.

The Ringette Alberta volunteer board has remained as a very democratic structure that includes board representation from all eight zones within the province. It does not focus

all of its attention on the elite. At times this democratic process or regional representation has been frustrating because those representatives are often not in attendance at the meetings. Karen Frank talked about the role of the zone directors:

> It is really important to have those zones involved because that is a huge part of your base and you don't want to lose that. If they are not going to be able to make the meetings anyway then what are they contributing by having them fill that position there? To have a Boards function effectively, you got to have people there. They've got to be there on a regular basis. You can't have them attend one meeting every 2 or 3 months (Interview, July 11, 1995).

The zone directors perform an important function on the Ringette Alberta board. Without their representation, the association would not hear about the needs of the more outlying areas. Between 1986 and 1995, representation on the board in positions other than as zone director has been primarily (nearly 80%) by individuals that live within two hours of Edmonton with the vast majority residing in Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Spruce Grove or Fort Saskatchewan (46%). There has also been a huge under representation by those in Zone 1 (under 5%), Zone 2 (0%), Zone 4 (under 4%) and Zone 8 (0%). Zone 1 is located in southern Alberta and includes Medicine Hat and Lethbridge as well as many smaller ringette communities. Zone 2 is the area surrounding Calgary and includes Cochrane, Airdrie as well as other smaller communities such as Hussar and Strathmore. Zone 4 is central

Alberta, including Red Deer while Zone 8 includes all of the northern communities of the 'peace country'. When I asked board members about this lack of rural representation on the board of directors in positions other than as zone directors the typical response was that it was really too far to travel and that "it was a huge commitment to ask somebody" (Frank Interview, July 11, 1995) to drive all that way to a meeting in Red Deer or Edmonton. No one questioned why the majority of the Executive meetings are held in Edmonton. By looking at this question from a technological perspective, not having volunteers from these 'other' ringette communities is irrelevant to the association in terms of efficiency and production. In terms of a different kind of logic these kinds of questions can be pertinent. Franklin (1990) discusses the logic of technology

> where prescriptive technologies are structured to perform social transactions, these transactions will be organized or reorganized according to the logic of technology, the logic of production. This logic begins to overpower and displace other types of social logic such as the logic of compassion or the logic of obligation (p.94).

The lack of concern expressed over this issue is significant. At the national level, the weakening of regional representation on national boards was studied and documented by Macintosh and Whitson (1990). They note that without considering the importance of regional representation, those in more remote regions will not be involved in the decision making process and,

> the peripheral regions of Canada will fall further

> behind, and will get little or nothing of the monies the Canadian government spends on sport (p. 53).

Ringette Alberta and ringette could still be classified as a recreational sport alternative. RA hosts provincials for a full range of participants and not just for the purposes of representing Alberta at the Canadian Ringette Championships. As an employee, it at times seems ridiculous that we are hosting provincial championships for 17 different divisions. My perspective has been that the provincial championships exists only to determine the team that will represent Alberta at the Canadian Ringette Championships. This too is a logic that is defined by achievement and not by simple experience, participation and fun.

In general the response to the initiatives taken by Ringette Alberta in the late 1980s was very positive. All of the initiatives created enthusiasm about the future of the sport. Not one of the board members I interviewed suggested that these initiatives may have prevented something else from happening. The overwhelming feeling was that this was the way in which ringette had to go and therefore the changes were good ones. Franklin (1990) discusses the process of the invention, growth, acceptance, standardization, and stagnation of new ideas, practices and technologies and says "that in the early stage of a particular invention, a good deal of enthusiam and imagination is generated" (p. 95). She provides an example of the invention of the automobile. When

cars were first developed and available,

> care was regularly lavished by young men upon their vehicles, polishing them repairing them and improving their performances. Now for many, owning a car is neither a joy nor a luxury but a necessity (Franklin 1990, p. 96).

She also discusses the infrastructures that are put in place to facilitate the use of these products, systems and technologies. For the automobile these infrastructures include roadways, service stations and the petroleum industry. "These structures and infrastructures are put in place to facilitate the use of these products and to develop dependency on them" (Franklin 1990, p. 102). As she says, taking the car is now not a choice but a necessity (p. 97). She further claims that "promises of liberation through technology can become a ticket to enslavement" (Franklin 1990, p. 100). Although the term enslavement is drastic, sport organizations have become very dependent on financial and administrative resources that they receive from government and government arm's-length agencies. The majority of the financial resources that are required to operate an office and to have permanent paid staff as well as to run a Canada Winter Games program comes from a government agency. This is a kind of 'enslavement'. As Franklin (1984) says, "techniques are not only collections of means for achieving something, but at the same time are a means of preventing something else from occurring" (p.5).

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations

In order for us to make changes within the technological culture in which we live, it is vital that we first understand its structure (Franklin, 1984, p. 11). Hall et al (1991) explain that "by deliberately examining what is often taken for granted, we can better understand the social structure that we and others have created, and in turn understand how these structures contour the limits and possibilities for a more democratic form of sport" (p. 236). Throughout this thesis, I have identified the structures of technology, shown evidence of these structures in sport, sport organizations and specifically in Ringette Alberta and finally pointed out the implications of these structures.

In this final chapter I provide a brief discussion about the future of ringette in the technological culture in which we live. I utilize Franklin's (1990) ideas of change within the structures of technology and how these ideas of change might be applied to ringette and to Ringette Alberta. I also discuss my own vision for the future of the sport.

Precarious Future

When I started to play the game of ringette in Edmonton in 1976, I wanted the opportunity to skate and play in a team sport like my brother. Ringette seemed to me to be the best and only solution. I had never considered playing hockey. I did not think that I would be allowed.

Karen Frank, a former player and executive member of RA

stated that for her, ringette "was something that, along with a lot of girls, I jumped at the chance to play" because playing hockey "just wasn't really accepted at that time" (Interview, July 11, 1995).

The sport of ringette has grown in Alberta beyond its initial aim of "the playing of ringette as a mass participation team sport for girls and women within Alberta" (RA Constitution, 1976). The sport is now played at International levels, at the Canada Winter Games, the Alberta Winter Games as well as at several other levels within the province. In Ontario, the game is played by men with the Ontario Ringette Association hosting its first men's provincials in 1994. The game has also just recently been demonstrated and taught in Japan by an Alberta athlete. Despite these advancements and the significant growth of the game to around thirty thousand in Canada and to over four thousand in Alberta, the sport of ringette still seems to have a very precarious existence.

> I've never been confident that ringette is going to last. It seems somewhat of a tenuous existence. (Karen Frank, Interview, July 11, 1995).

Just recently at the national level, Ringette Canada, the national sport association (NSO) received notification along with several other NSOs that they would lose 100% of their federal funding by 1996. Ringette Alberta has found some stable ground in the past year but without financial resources at the national level, it does become questionable whether ringette has a viable existence within a sport

bureaucracy that requires not happy, healthy participants but a high profile including gold medals at Olympic and International events.

Aniko Varpalotai has asked whether ringette was just "merely a transition sport in a historical period when girls had little opportunity for winter sport participation beyond figure skating" (1991, p.27). I disagree with this statement. The game may have been invented as a lesser version of men's ice hockey for girls and women but as I have shown, the sport has grown to be much more than that. Women's ice hockey has provided another opportunity for girls and women to participate in another different winter team sport. Ice hockey and ringette are significantly different although their comparison seems understandable because they are played on the same ice surface and with very similar equipment. Ringette is more like basketball than hockey. There are no off-sides and intentional body contact is not allowed.

Unfortunately ringette is constantly being compared to hockey. The response of the interviewees and the ringette people to whom I talk as I carry out my functions as provincial coach for Ringette Alberta is that "we must get into the Olympics. Look at women's hockey. It has taken off." Girls and women are not all turning to play ice hockey because it will be included in the 1998 Winter Olympics. Only twenty Canadian female ice hockey players will be represented at these upcoming Olympics. It is too narrow a

view to think that the only reason that more girls and women are now playing ice hockey than ever before is because of its acceptance into the Olympics.

Within the technological culture in which we live, ringette organizers do not seem to have a choice as to whether they want to pursue Olympic participation or not. It seems as if ringette must attempt to join the ranks of other high profile sports or become a purely recreational sport. I am not suggesting that either way is right or wrong but I do not think that ringette should be limited to one end of the spectrum or another. If we were to look at things as Franklin (1990) states in a "less pragmatic way and breakaway from the technological mindset to focus on justice, fairness, and equality in the global sense" (p. 123), different reasons and choices might evolve.

Crisis of Governance

Franklin (1990) explains that "the crisis of technology is actually a crisis of governance" (p. 120). This is not to suggest that ringette organizers should place blame on the state about the situation in which they now find themselves. Franklin (1990) explains that governance includes more than just the government. It also includes the managers directly and indirectly responsible for governance of our society. This includes the governance of sport and of ringette. The governors of ringette too have often taken a pragmatic or limited view in their decisions and actions.

It is important that the decision makers in ringette from the federal government level to the community league level not be limited by their own views of the sport that have been structured primarily by an attempt to create a sport 'appropriate' for girls. Nor should the decision makers be limited by the views of the technical and administrative experts who are so prevalent now in the Canadian sport bureaucracy. "We need to change or reform the institution of government in terms of responsibility and accountability to the people as people" (Franklin, 1990, p. 120). One of the ways in which Franklin (1990) suggests that this may be done is to listen and trust in our own and in other people's direct experiences rather than relying upon the experts. In ringette, this would suggest that the governors of the sport, whether they are technical or administrative experts or parent volunteers begin to place a much larger emphasis on the input of the participants of the sport at all levels.

The vision that I have for the sport does not depend on financial funding from any level of government. The strength of ringette has always been the players of the game and the ownership and enthusiasm that they hold for their sport. For example the provincial teams from Ringette Alberta were successful despite all of the difficulties that the Association encountered in the early 1990s. As a player I have always felt a strong ownership to the game. An ownership that I have not felt in other sports that I have

participated in such as softball, soccer, volleyball, basketball and women's ice hockey. Karen Frank, a board member and former player describes this ownership,

> I think that when it comes to ringette I have a real sense of pride because it is really our game. It is the only sport that I can think of that is so uniquely female. Although I guess that there are males that play it. It is not considered to be a man's game. So in a sense it was something that you almost had a personal stake in it's success because it was the only thing that was there for women. This one is a little bit more personal (Personal Interview, July 11, 1995).

The governors of ringette, the executive and board members of our national and provincial ringette organizations have neglected to form a vision with these players as the leaders within it. An example that I provide is in coaching. When I first started to play the game of ringette over twenty years ago, I heard people say that the reason that there were not any female coaches was that the sport was too young and that the girls and women that played the game were not coaching yet. There has always been an assumption that the participants of the game will automatically become coaches. There has been no evidence of this occurring. For example, at the Canadian Ringette Championships in 1983, the percentage of females in coaches or assistant coaches roles was 17.4%. In 1995, over a decade later the percentage was 23.3%. These numbers are significantly low for a sport that was intended for girls and women. It is only through the direct personal experiences of ringette players that the sport of ringette will survive. Male coaches typically bring

with them an ice hockey background. Ringette players bring with them not only a ringette background but a personal pride in the sport, something that only a ringette player could bring.

Ringette Alberta has implemented a coaching policy that requires certain certification levels of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) depending on the level being coached. The policy also has a plan for gender equity. As one might imagine there are a number of advantages and disadvantages to this policy but the majority of complaints that I receive about the policy come from men who suggest that they do not need to take a ringette coaching clinic because they "have coached hockey for years". These phone calls help to exemplify why the sport of ringette needs the direct personal experience of its players.

Hall, Cullen and Slack (1989) state that "In ringette, most people like working in what they describe as a "blended" organization and, while there have been some attempts to promote women into leadership positions, there is no perceived need for formal mechanisms" (p. 32). Therein lies the problem: the view that there is not a problem.

By utilizing the strength of personal experience, emotion and enthusiasm, we may begin to remove some of the structures that have prevented ringette from being a more democratic sport as well as from being a more competitive sport. Franklin (1990) calls this the "earth-worm theory of social change" (p. 120). She suggests that social change

will come through seeds growing in well prepared soil-and it is we, like the earthworms, who prepare the soil" (p. 121).

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